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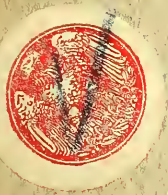

VERSES

By

ARMITAGE T. LIVINGSTON

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VERSES

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ARMITAGE T. LIVINGSTON

Philadelphia
1915

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DEDICATED TO
A. E. DuP.

TO A FRIEND

In mountains where the truth of life was found
  Within the heart of Nature—and the glow
Of evening drew the shadows to the ground—
  We met in friendship's realm—the realm to know.

The years have blessed my life with happy days,
  Each one a deeper spring, a deeper breath.
This Easter morn I'll raise my heart in praise,
  And wish that we'll be friends e'en after death.

RETROSPECT

In the morning, when the sunshine
  Cast its golden spell on earth,
All the world seemed bright and cheerful,
  Brimming o'er with happy mirth.

Then behind the hills of knowledge
  Crept a cloud which threatened rain,
Passed the sun and darkened nature—
  Speeding on in doubt again.

In the evening, when the raindrops
  Fell in silence from above,
All the joys of morning sunshine
  Vanished—with a shattered love.

THE FROGS

When shadows cast their spell around
Among the woods and o'er the ground
  Beneath the smile of spring,
And little stars all blink their eyes,
And whisper to the evening skies,
  The frogs begin to sing.

From every marsh and every bog,
The little brook and mossy log,
  Deep in the forest's lair,
Like sleighbells tinkling through the night,
Midst frosty glade and silver light,
  We hear their evening prayer.

A THOUGHT

Were every thought a tiny star
  Above thee, dear, at night,
My love for thee would be proclaimed
  Amidst a world of light.

A BENEDICTION

The sun has kissed the skies good-by
  With loving, tender care;
And to the earth the afterglow
  Conveys his evening prayer.

DESPAIR

Fair summer days and a hope beyond
  The amethyst shades of eve,
Hope upheld by the promise of dawn
  When night and her tribute leave.

The world in sorrow, the world in need—
  Ah, heart, it is all in vain!
For love once lost in the anguish of years
  Will never return again.

MEMORY

Like sunset colors in the sky
  Are thoughts of bygone days;
A memory in the evening clouds
  And through the dying rays.

I stretch my hands in vain appeal
  Out towards the glowing west;
But twilight creeps into my heart
  And whispers: God knows best.

MY WONDER

Wonder why we always long for things we haven't
got?
Wonder why some folks is thinkin' theirs a sorry
lot?
Ain't there sunshine here by day?
Ain't there stars at night?
Ain't there little birds whose songs tell us life is
bright?

Let us try to think some day we'll have our laugh
and fun,
Then we'll say a prayer of thanks for all the work
we've done.
Ain't my meanin' clear to you?
Ain't you goin' to try?
If you do, I'm sure you'll find a rainbow in the sky.

PERCHANCE

Perchance the strains of a little song,
The song of a little bird,
May bring the tears to a lonely heart,
The heart that alone has heard.

Perchance the fragrance of burning leaves,
Outside, on an autumn day,
May bring a pang to the lonely heart
For someone now far away.

Perchance the sunlight upon the fields
Or wonderful sea of blue,
May bring a prayer to the lonely heart—
God's blessing for you, for you!

TEARS

A little hope, a happy day,
A little dream of love;
A little hour to kneel and pray
For blessings from above.

A little pang, a piercing dart,
A little breath of fear;
A little cry, a broken heart,
And then—a little tear.

AN EVENING THOUGHT

The mountains call at the close of day,
When shadows are dim and the trees are gray
  In the mists of afterglow.
And fairies dance 'neath the summer moon
In forests old, to the whispering tune
  Of the breezes soft and low.

TO ——

Into the dawn of another day
  A soul passed out in the night—
Leaving the world in a mist of gray
  And tears for the vanished light.

We grieve and mourn for the days of yore,
  Forgetting our Father's love!
Oh, know you not she has gone before
  To welcome you there above?

THE VISITOR

A little thought is knocking at my heart,
And begs to have me set it, captive, free;
But ah, for years we have not been apart!
That little thought has been the world to me.

Remembrance is its name, and sweet the day
It crept into my heart; and now the pain
And throbbing void which bids Remembrance stay,
Makes life with all its future hope in vain.

WHISPERINGS

From out the past I heard a sound—
A whispering soft and low.
Like shadows flitting o'er the ground,
Where silence breathes in peace profound,
The whispering cast its spell around
The golden long ago.

IMAGINATION

Over the world I went one day,
  Over the hills and sea—
Out to the mountains, lakes and streams,
  And you came back to me!

Deep in the silence of the wood
  I heard your voice again.
With trembling heart I journeyed on,
  But ah! 'twas all in vain.

Your voice grew fainter, then it died.
  The echo lingered long
Among the hills, and in my heart
  'Twill be an endless song.

THE CITY

From out the city rose a cry of pain
From hearts of those who sought their creeds in vain;
Who stumbled on their way with bruiséd feet,
And sought for shelter in each winding street.

But ah! no hand to save them in the crowd
Of passing toilers with their manners proud;
No heart to hear the sad and lonely cries
Or heed the falling tears and careworn sighs.

A SEA SKETCH

Beneath the ocean throb the hearts
  Of waves, both great and small;
And o'er the blue and trackless sea
  Their pulses rise and fall.

A lonely seagull soars above
  In silent, graceful flight,
And in the west, the evening clouds
  Bid tribute to the night.

ECHO

We stood on a hill and cried, "Yo ho!"
The close of a summer day,
While the purple hills, the rocks and rills,
Repeated it, far away.

I stood on the hill in later years,
Alone, 'neath an azure sky;
I called to the hills, the rocks and rills—
The distance echoed, "Good-by!"

A SONG

Like the breath of God is the evening wind
  Which blows from the dreaming plain;
Like the touch of His hand, so soft and kind
  Are the drops of the falling rain.

And the warmth of the sun—ah! blessed sun—
  And the peace of the starlit night,
Should fashion our souls when our lives are done
  For the land of eternal light.

SHADOWS

Wearily, wearily, 'round the world
  The shadows of memory fly—
Drearily, dreadily, wings outspread,
  'Neath the moon in a starlit sky.

Drearily, drearily, 'round the world,
  'Mid the veil of descending tears—
Wearily, wearily, through the mists
  In the valley of long-lost years.

THE CARDINAL BIRD

A flash of red from the forest trees—
  A spark from the dying sun—
This little bird with his crested head
  I saw when the day was done.

High on a branch near the evening sky,
  He sang to the earth below—
The happy song of that little heart
  Remained—in the afterglow.

MISTS

Like mists upon the distant hills
  Are hopes for future years—
They rest awhile to tempt our smile,
  Then fade in dew-like tears!

THERE IS

There's a country road a-winding 'neath the elm
trees in the hills,
And a summer sky a-smiling on the rocks and on
the rills;
And a little brook is smiling
In a manner most beguiling
To the willow trees and orchards where the song
of nature thrills.

There's a lonely heart a-dreaming of the starlight
and the haze
On the purple hills at twilight, at the close of
autumn days.
And the smell of leaves a-burning
Lends the heart a pang of yearning
For the past and for the golden glow of childhood's
sunny rays.

THE BROWNIES

Upon a shelf there's a row of books,
  Dusty and worn, each page
Marked by the fingers of baby hands
  And stained with the breath of age.

Brownies are there, with their old-time pranks,
  And nobody joins their game;
They play alone on the old bookshelf,
  For years are never the same.

Brownies are old, but their hearts are bright
  As gold in a fair sunbeam;
But the baby heart, and the baby soul,
  Found youth was merely a dream.

TO B. U. L., III

A little heart has come to me
From out the skies where angels live,
A heart quite pure and sensitive;
And now to God I make this plea,
In fervent prayer and humble mien,
For future hopes and things unseen:

"This little soul, dear God, is mine
To cherish in this world of ours,
And nurture as Thy precious flowers
'Mid rain and golden summer shine.
I ask Thee, God, to hear my prayer,
And bless my baby with Thy care.

"Direct his footsteps in this life
Through happy fields and ways secure;
A loving heart and instincts pure,
Devoid of evil thoughts and strife,
His eyes upraised to Thee above,
And strengthened by the mother love."

THE PATH

A little path through a meadow wound,
And whispered to the flowers:
"I love the grass and I love the ground,
Oh, golden are my hours!
I wander east and I wander west,
With never a thought for care;
I climb the hills to the mountain crest,
To homes of Whither and Where,
And down again on the other side
I plunge in thicket of fern,
Deep in the shade where the stream runs wide,
Away from the world's concern.
On, on I go through the fields of maize,
Through fields of glimmering wheat,
Through pastures fair in the sun's last rays,
Where lambs and their mothers bleat.
Good-night to the world and all its wrongs—
The peace of the starlit sky,
The drowsy hum of the cricket's song,
As I go wandering by."

* * * * *

The path was bathed in the moon's soft light,
Creeping away to the dawn,
Away to the east, from the land of night
To sunrise of early morn.

THE HILLS

My heart is in the mountains, dear, 'mid sylvan rock and glade,
Where forest trees are whispering to the blue;
Where waterfalls are rainbows when the sunlight colors fade,
And hillsides sparkle in the morning dew.

My love is in the mountains, dear, untouched by grief or care—
Unknowing fear and innocent of wrong.
The sunset offers sanction, and the wood-thrush lends his prayer,
To God alone, in ecstasy of song.

My soul is in the mountains, dear, in Paradise it seems;
But ah! the gray mists gather o'er the lea,
And shadows creep along the hills, obscuring all the dreams
Of mountain life, which is so dear to me.

THE SEASONS

SPRING

There are roads which wind through the waking
world,
Where woods are fragrant and wild
With the breath of youth, and the touch of truth,
And soul of a happy child.

SUMMER

There are roads which wind underneath the grass
And weeds in meadow and glade—
Little roads unseen, where no man hath been,
In realms of sunlight and shade.

AUTUMN

There are roads which lead to the purple hills,
And west to the setting sun—
'Neath an autumn sky, where the blackbirds fly
And the summer days are done.

WINTER

There are roads which lead to the trackless snow—
Oh, song of a winter day!
For the brooklets sing, and the sleighbells ring,
As the roads wind on their way.

CANADIAN SNOW STORM

The priests offer prayers to ashen skies
From whence the snowflakes fall to garb the earth
In raiment pure and spotless as the love
Which prompted our dear Lord to give them birth.

WAGNER

Hark! down the ages of the world,
Where Mystery lurks and hearts enthrall,
Where Pathos dwells with Joy unfurled,
The Nibelung's strains forever call.

Afar, they stir the soul to life,
Awakening every sense within—
The power of Love, the ways of Strife,
Upholding Passion, lending Sin.

Oh, wondrous music! Wagner's heart
Portrayed in Sorrow, Grief and Smile,
Death claimed, and though we're far apart,
His spirit breathes with us awhile.

REGRETS

Regrets come creeping to the heart at eve,
When Silence wraps her arms around
The world, and words unspoken bring the tears
To eyes whose vision Sorrow found.

Aye, sorrow for the spoken words to those
Whom life holds dearest—and we crave
Forgiveness, that the future may be spent
In gently laying Memory in the grave.

DEARIE DEAR

On the crest of a hill, oh Dearie Dear,
We laughed at the world below;
And the sparkling lake and the nodding trees
Were friends whom we both did know.

And our hearts were both young, oh Dearie Dear,
Though yours on a loving quest,
Fighting alone in the battle of hope,
With never a moment's rest.

Then you lost your battle, oh Dearie Dear,
The fortress you could not hold!
Your heart was all shattered, and Dearie Dear,
My heart is forever old.

A DEDICATION

You asked for love, I gave mine in return,
And praised the world in accents soft and low;
The sunrise kissed the earth in morning prayer,
And Nature smiled her gratitude below.

The river sang of promises fulfilled,
And soothed the hearts whose faith had long since died.
The forests stretched their branches toward the sky,
Wherein their solace and their peace abide.

The sunset, when the evening shadows fell,
Bore slumbers to the birds from out the west,
And 'neath each tiny wing a feathered head
Crept, from a day of singing, into rest.

The stars at night expressed in their sweet way
The constant, watchful care of Him above,
And blessed the hours sent us which we lived
In perfect harmony and holy love.

FATE

"Oh yesterday, oh yesterday, your barque has gone
to sea;
Today is here — tomorrow comes — what will it
bring to me?
Bright sunlit skies? Wind-driven clouds? Or
silver tears of rain?"

* * * * *

"Your life has gone with yesterday, and naught
but tears remain."

AN AFTERVIEW

The sad gray sands and the sad gray sea;
The moaning of restless waves—
A tearful glance and a heartfelt sigh
For those in their ocean graves.

A sudden light from the drifting clouds,
An echo from Heav'n above
To cheer the world and its lonely thoughts,
The gift of a Father's love.
The sands are golden, the sea is bright;
A pathway lies o'er the waves—
Golden and hopeful—the answered prayers
Of those in their ocean graves.

HOPE

Far away, Little Girl, in the future beyond
The portals of life's ebbing day,
We will bless and remember the joys that are gone
With time and the memories of play.

For our youth, Little Girl, bids us all a farewell
When flowers are faded and sere,
And the garden of childhood is buried in leaves
Which fall at the close of each year.

So be brave, Little Girl, for the garden is old—
Our tears have been dewdrops and rain
But to nurture the flowers and strengthen the faith
In promise of springtime again.

THE LOST SMILE

Youth breathed good-by to me one summer night,
And asked a token, that I might remain
Within his mem'ry till the morning light,
But not retain.

I gave the best I had—a happy smile—
And said, "Auf wiedersehen, until the dawn."
But youth had many methods to beguile—
My smile has gone!

THE LITTLE RED HOUSE

Up in the hills there's a little red house,
A little red house by the maple trees;
And right on a hill,
Where the world is still,
The little red house is kissed by the breeze.

A row of elms by the little red house
Are whispering their secrets to all that pass.
'Neath an autumn sky,
Where the blackbirds fly,
The little red house dreams on in the grass.

Oh, would I could fly to the little red house,
Up there in the hills where my heart will stay
Unfettered, nor bound
By the city's sound,
To the little red house so far away.

A BABY'S SMILE

Two eyes upturned in love,
  Ah! wait awhile—
'Tis but a glimpse of Heav'n,
  My baby's smile!

TO B. U. L., III

Little clouds up in the sky,
  Shadows flitting below,
Sunshine fairies in the fields,
  Where the flowers grow.

Baby lambkins on the hills,
  Playing in the dew,
Little birdies on the trees,
  Singing songs for you!

DREAMS

The dawn brings solace to my lonely heart;
For, lying half awake, the yester-dreams
Come wandering through the lanes where shadows part
Their garlands to the myriad sunrise gleams.

They drift before my vision and then fade
Into the utter silence of the air.
Oh, would the Land of Dreams from whence they strayed
Permit the powers of daylight hold them there!

TWO DAWNS

The dawn when mist lies softly on the hills,
Where dewdrops glisten in the fields like rain,
And silence whispers summons to the trills
Of early songsters with their sweet refrain.

The dawn when heart expectant gently dreams
Of Heav'n within a baby's wondrous eyes,
And waits the sunrise with its golden beams
To bring the precious burden from the skies.

SHADES

When the shadows 'gin to fall,
And the crickets 'gin to call,
In the meadows, where the little lambs are bleating;
And the sunset gilds the trees,
To the sighing of the breeze,
As it sings to tell the world that life is fleeting;

When the shadows 'gin to fall,
And the crickets 'gin to call,
O'er the hills where memory's tears like dew are lying,
We stretch forth our hands and pray
For the breath of one lost day,
But the night wind tells the world that life is dying.

ONCE MORE

If I might wander down the years
  In valley cool and green,
Where sunrise kissed the mountain tops
  In reverence, world-wide seen—
I'd search the world both near and far
  For souls that once have been.

O Life, who lends no turning back
  To one fair day of yore—
If thou wouldst wield thy magic wand,
  And sing the fairy lore—
One soul would span those sunlit hills,
  And call to me once more.

MEMORIES

From out a rift of clouds whose whiteness gleamed
  Against the turquoise beauty of the sky,
There fell a shower of golden light, which seemed
  To bring the peace of Heav'n earthward nigh.

The purple hills wherein the valleys cool
  Gave utterance to the world in river song,
Reflected shadows in the forest pool,
  Awakening memories which had slumbered long.

The sunbeams, gathered close to twilight's breast,
  Bore secrets to the silvery stars of night,
And through the world of longing and unrest
  Our memories lingered with the morning light.

LULLABIES

A dreaming field and woodland glade
  In mists of spectral light,
A lonesome pool where moonbeams strayed
  Among the shades of night.

And in the treetops silver thoughts
  Were swinging to and fro
Among the night wind's lullabies
  And songs of long ago.

The drooping leaves were stirred from sleep
  And rustled in the dark,
Awakening little forest folk
  And one lone meadow lark,

Who rose above the sleeping world
  A soul, among the bars
Of bell-like melody which changed
  The silver thoughts to stars.

THE PATH OF SHADOWS

The Path of Shadows—whither does it lead?
Unto the valley lands, or recessed woods
  Wherein the Pipes of Pan are dimly heard?
Or does it strangely wander through the years
  That vanish—like the swan song of a bird?

A DEDICATION

The ways of the world are strange, dear,
  The hours and seconds are fleet;
The years bring many a change, dear,
  But all time with you is sweet!

The heavens are often gray, dear,
  The fog is obscure and blind,
But only when you are away, dear,
  The tears of the world I find.

SUN AND STAR BLOOM

"Sun-bloom, Star-bloom, have you aught for me
Hidden in your little hearts, lulled by mystery?"
Sun-bloom, Star-bloom, never answered me,
Though I scanned their little hearts, mirrored in
the sea!

THE PINE TREE

O Pine Tree, Pine Tree, what do you see
Up in the world so high—
The sky more blue, and the world more true,
Far up where the blackbirds fly?

Or do you hear, in the whispering pines,
The soul of a passing bird,
Who passed but late with the dying vines
And the oft unspoken word?

THE WIND

Was it wind that blew through the cypress tree
When shadows were silent and gray?
Or was it a sigh that escaped from me
And fled toward the light of day?

TO MELBA

We know the hush at twilight, the robin's evening song,
The early lark and woodland thrush who cheer our hearts along;
But ah! the hush at twilight thrills in ecstasy supreme—
The early lark and woodland thrush have one delicious dream—
When Melba sings.

We know the heart is breaking for someone far away
Across the sunlit mountains, beyond another day;
But ah! our souls are meeting across the happy Past—
We feel the hand of Time has stayed the hours we longed to last—
When Melba sings.

UNATTAINABLE

Caressed by drifting clouds and sun-kissed winds,
The mountain tops rise dreamily above
The sheltered valleys and the rushing streams,
And lose themselves amid the light of love.

Within the valley, by a shaded rock
Where sun-kissed winds are never wont to play,
A lonely tree strives eagerly to reach
The mountain tops before the break of day.

PERHAPS

Perhaps beyond the purple hills
  There lies a sea of gold,
So sparkling bright and filled with light,
  The foam can scarcely hold
The spray which dashes from the waves
  To meet the sun of old.

Perhaps beyond that sun of old
  There lies a garden fair,
Where skylarks sing and bluebells ring
  At time of evening prayer,
And all regrets we left on earth
  Are birds with plumage rare.

STRIVING

I strove to reach a glistening star,
  Which graced the twilight sky
And twinkled in the heights afar,
  Entreating me to fly.

But ere the sunrise with its glow
  Had warmed the shadows gray,
The earth ensnared me here below,
  To live another day.

VISIONS

I looked toward the west at sunset,
The sky was aflame with light,
And shadowy clouds had gathered
To herald approach of night.

Half closing my eyes, I wondered
If things are all as they seem;
The clouds like a row of mountains,
Were naught but a shattered dream.

DESIRE

A little path runs east and west
  Along the mountain side,
Caressed by winds and lichen moss,
  Where little acorns hide.

I tread not on the eastern path,
  Nor on the western trail;
For northern voices sing the songs
  Which echo in the vale,

And urge me climb the gnarléd paths
  O'ergrown with roots and briars,
Far hidden 'neath the prints of time
  And thorns of wild desires.

DESPAIR

Afar in the woods where the sun was gold
And the wood-thrush sang his prayer,
'Mid leafy bough in the forest old—
Oh, the heart of life was there!

Now in the town where the world is new
I walk with a weary tread,
Alone and sad, for a voice I knew—
Oh, the heart of life is dead!

REGAINED

I lost a song—it ventured from my heart
And sought the world-wide portals of the dawn;
But ere the violet raised her dew-wet eyes,
The lark conveyed my lost notes to the morn.

THE POOL

In the heart of a forest dim and old,
Where the sunlight fell in a show'r of gold
  And the birds sang all day long—
Oh, the joy of life to a dreaming pool
That lay in the shade of a forest cool
  Was 'kin to the twilight song.

Now the leaves have changed and the needles
      fall,
And the memories cling to an old-time call
  Through the wood-smoke and blue haze.
But the forest pool is a shimmering tear,
For it misses the leaves it held so dear,
  And the unforgotten days.

THE LARK

The Lark arose one sunny morn
  Unto the azure sky,
And from the sun-kissed clouds there fell
  A daylight lullaby.

Dame Nature smiled and closed her eyes
  One moment while she slept;
But I, a soul by memory claimed,
  Bowed to the earth and wept.

REMEMBRANCE

Forget? Ah! lilacs fill the air with thoughts
  Which carry laden messages from you,
And buttercups reflect the golden rays
  Of sunlight in the meadows wet with dew.
Each flower recalls a careless day of mirth
  Among the hills, where we were journeying on
As gypsies, you and I, hand clasped in hand,
  Regardless of the hours swiftly gone.

AFTERMATH

Oh, gold was the west when the sun went down
Over a trackless sea,
And beyond the foam on the sun-kissed waves
A voice was calling me.
Then the stars shone out of the darkened skies
Over the trackless sea,
And beyond the foam on the moon-bathed waves
The voice ceased calling me.

A SUPPLICATION

If I were a little girl again,
In the blue hills far away,
With the breath of God across the fields
At the close of a summer day,

I'd raise my eyes to the skies above
And utter a fervent prayer,
That youth would stay and enfold the years
With the strength to keep me there.

LILACS

A lilac-scented lane,
  A spray of gold
With sunlight on the leaves
  And blossoms old.

A memory for a time
  Adown the lane,
Then raindrops on the leaves,
  And shade again.

THE PASSING OF LOVE

Love came over the hills one day,
  Spreading his golden dreams
Over the land of shadows gray,
  With restless hidden streams.

Deep in the woodland fell the mist
  Where leaves obscured the sky,
And Love gave life to all he kissed—
  But ah! he passed me by.

THE BUTTERCUP MEADOWS

There's a song in my heart that is singing away
To the tune of the Past, and a once happy day,
When cloud shadows drifted and danced in our play,
Out in the Buttercup Meadows.

And there's nothing can silence the tune or the song,
They have throbbed in my heart and my memory too long;
And the chords of remembrance are vibrant and strong,
Out in the Buttercup Meadows.

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